

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

1. (Currently Amended) A method comprising:

receiving a first request from a requesting instance of a plurality of instances of an application;

in response to receiving the first request, transmitting an index file to the requesting instance, wherein the index file comprises a hierarchal file structure configured to identify a set of instances, the file structure including at least one instance name criterion, at least one configuration criterion nested within the instance name criterion, and a plurality of filter criteria nested within each configuration criterion, wherein:

the name criterion identifies a specific agent or application and includes at least one of the configuration criteria;

each configuration criterion identifies a class of instances, and includes a location of first data and at least one filter criterion;

each filter criterion includes a plurality of instance properties; and

at least one filter criterion identifies the requesting instance;

a criterion for identifying a set of instances of the plurality of instances to receive first data and a location of the first data;

receiving a second request from the requesting instance that is generated by the requesting instance in response to a filter engine associated with the requesting instance determining that the requesting instance is included in the set of instances; and

in response to receiving the second request, transmitting the first data to the requesting instance.

2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the index file is transmitted to the requesting instance when second data associated with the criterion and the location is updated.

3. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the index file is transmitted to the requesting instance after second data associated with the criterion and the location is updated and after a predetermined amount of time has passed since the second data was updated.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising:  
receiving a message indicating whether the first data was received.

5. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 4 further comprising:  
retransmitting the first data upon request by the requesting instance when the message indicates that an error occurred in [[in]] response to transmitting the first data.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein  
the first data comprise configuration data for each of the set of instances of the application.

7. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein  
the first data comprise an announcement to be sent to each of the set of instances of the application.

8. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein  
the first data comprise one of:  
a first executable program for each of the set of instances of the application,  
a second executable program to install a third executable program for each of the set of  
instances of the application, and  
a component of the application for each of the set of instances of the application.

Claims 9-10: (Cancelled)

11. (Currently Amended) A system comprising:  
first means for transmitting an index file that comprises:

a hierarchal file structure configured to identify a set of instances of an application,  
the file structure including at least one instance name criterion, at least one configuration  
criterion nested within the instance name criterion, and a plurality of filter criteria nested  
within each configuration criterion, wherein

the name criterion identifies a specific agent or application and includes at  
least one of the configuration criteria;

each configuration criterion identifies a class of instances, and includes a  
location of first data and at least one filter criterion;

each filter criterion includes a plurality of instance properties; and

at least one filter criterion identifies a requesting instance,

a criterion for identifying a set of instances of a plurality of instances of an application to

~~receive first data and a location of the first data;~~

wherein the first means transmits the index file in response to receiving a first request  
from the [[a]] requesting instance of the plurality of instances; and  
second means for transmitting the first data to the requesting instance in response to receiving  
a second request from the requesting instance for the first data.

12. (Original) The system of claim 11 further comprising:

receiving means for receiving a message indicating whether the first data was received.

13. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 12 further comprising:

third means for retransmitting the first data again upon request by the requesting instance  
when the message indicates that an error occurred in receiving the first data.

Claims 14–18: (Cancelled)

19. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable medium comprising:

first instructions to transmit an index file in response to receiving a first request from a  
requesting instance of a plurality of instances of an application, wherein the index file comprises a  
hierarchal file structure configured to identify a set of instances, the file structure including at least  
one instance name criterion, at least one configuration criterion nested within the instance name  
criterion, and a plurality of filter criteria nested within each configuration criterion, wherein:  
the name criterion identifies a specific agent or application and includes at least one

of the configuration criteria;

each configuration criterion identifies a class of instances, and includes a location of first data and at least one filter criterion;

each filter criterion includes a plurality of instance properties;

at least one filter criterion identifies the requesting instance, and

~~a criterion for identifying a set of instances of a plurality of instances of an application to receive first data and a location of the first data in response to receiving a first request from a requesting instance of the plurality of instances of the application; and~~

second instructions to transmit the first data to the requesting instance in response to receiving a second request from the requesting instance for the first data.

20. (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 19 further comprising:  
receiving instructions to receive a message indicating whether the first data was received.

21. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable medium of claim 19 further comprising:

third instructions to retransmit the first data upon request by the requesting instance when the message indicates that an error occurred in receiving the first data.

Claims 22–26: (Cancelled)

27. (Currently Amended) A computer readable medium for storing instructions executable by a first computer system,

wherein a method is performed by the first computer system in response to executing the instructions, the method comprising the first computer system transmitting a index file to each of a plurality of second computer systems,

wherein the index file comprises a hierarchal file structure configured to identify a set of instances of an application, the file structure including at least one instance name criterion, at least one configuration criterion nested within the instance name criterion, and a plurality of filter criteria nested within each configuration criterion,

wherein:

the name criterion identifies a specific agent or application running on at least one of the plurality of second computer systems and includes at least one of the configuration criteria;

each configuration criterion identifies a class of instances, and includes a location of a data file and a plurality of filter criteria;

each filter criterion includes a plurality of instance properties; and

at least one filter criterion identifies at least one of the plurality of second computer systems, and

comprises first and second data, wherein the first data index file is processable by each of the plurality of second computer systems to determine whether that second computer system [[it]] should receive the data file stored at [[a]] the location identified by the second data-index file.

28. (Original) The computer readable medium of claim 27 wherein the plurality of second computer systems is a subset of computer systems coupled to the first computer system.

29. (Currently Amended) The computer readable medium of claim 27 further comprising the first computer system transmitting the data file to one of plurality of second computer systems in response to the first computer system receiving a request from the one of the plurality of second computer systems, wherein the first computer system receives the request after transmitting the index file to the one of the plurality of second computer systems.

30. (Currently Amended) A computer readable medium for storing instructions executable by a first computer system, wherein a method is performed by the first computer system in response to executing the instructions, the method comprising:

in response to receiving [[a]] an index file from a second computer system, the first computer system processing first data of the index file to determine whether the first computer system should request a data file stored at a location identified by second data of the index file, wherein the index file comprises a hierarchal file structure configured to identify a set of instances of an application, the file structure including at least one instance name criterion, a plurality of configuration criteria nested within the instance name criterion, and a plurality of filter criteria nested within each configuration criterion, wherein:

the name criterion identifies a specific agent or application running on the first computer system and includes at least two of the configuration criteria;

each configuration criterion identifies a class of computer systems that includes the

first computer system, and includes the location of the first data file and at least one filter criterion;

each filter criterion includes a plurality of properties characterizing the first computer system; and

at least one filter criterion identifies the requesting first computer system.

31. (Currently Amended) The computer readable medium of claim 30 wherein processing the first data comprises comparing the first data with third data stored in the first computer system, wherein the first computer system transmits a request for the data file stored at the location if the first computer system determines that the first data compares equally to the third data, wherein the first computer system transmits the request to the second computer system.

32. (New) The method of Claim 1, wherein the nested representation is implemented as XML instructions.

33. (New) The method of Claim 1, wherein an instance property is at least a portion of a telephone number.

34. (New) The method of Claim 1, wherein an instance property is a state.

35. (New) The method of Claim 1, wherein an instance property is a city.



36. (New) The method of Claim 1, wherein an instance property is a building location.
37. (New) The method of Claim 1, wherein an instance property is a department.
38. (New) The system of Claim 11, wherein an instance property is at least a portion of a telephone number.
39. (New) The system of Claim 11, wherein an instance property is a state.
40. (New) The system of Claim 11, wherein an instance property is a city.
41. (New) The computer-readable medium of Claim 19, wherein an instance property is at least a portion of a telephone number.
42. (New) The computer-readable medium of Claim 19, wherein an instance property is a state.
43. (New) The computer-readable medium of Claim 19, wherein an instance property is a city.